N° XVI.

THE THEATRICAL

CENSOR.

BY A CITIZEN.

Were others angry; I excus'd them too;
Well might they rage—I gave them but their due.
A man's true merit 'tis not hard to find;
But each man's secret standard in his mind,
That casting-weight, pride adds to emptiness,
This who can gratify? for who can guess?
* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * .
If want provok'd, or madness made them *print*,
I wag'd no war with bedlam or the mint.

POPE.

Monday Evening, March 17, 1806.

MACBETH.

THIS was the first appearance of Mr. Cooper, for the present season. Though the house was not crowded, he was honoured with the warmest welcome, and his talents and exertions fully repaid the compliment. From his first entrance on his performance, he discovered many of those features which distinguish "one that has been studied" in his part; but it was in the second act that he chiefly delighted us. Nature itself was visible in his description of the grooms "i'the second chamber:"

There's one did laugh in's sleep, and one cried *murder!*
That they did wake each other; I stood and heard them;

But they did say their prayers, and address them
Again to sleep.—
One cried, *God bless us!* and, *amen!* the other;
As they had seen me with these hangman's hands.
List'ning their fear, *I* could not say, amen,
When they did say, God bless us.—
But wherefore could not I pronounce amen!
I had most need of blessing, and *amen*
Stuck in my throat.—
Methought I heard a voice cry, *Sleep no more!*
Macbeth does murder sleep, the innocent sleep;
Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave of care,*
The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast;—
Still it cry'd, *Sleep no more!* to all the house:
Glamis has murder'd sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more, Macbeth shall sleep no more!

Mr. Cooper was also extremely happy in the hypocritical appearance of enthusiasm with which he exclaimed—

Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate and furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
The expedition of my violent love
Out-ran the pauser, reason.—Here lay Duncan,
His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood;
And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature,
For ruin's wasteful entrance;—there, the murderers,
Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
Unmannerly breech'd in gore: Who could refrain,
That had a heart to love, and, in that heart,
Courage to make love known?

The agonies of the murderer, toward the conclusion of the tragedy, and particularly in the fifth scene of the last act, were admirably depicted. Here, however, we must finish our eulogium, and give room to some animadversions of a different nature. In the passage,—

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* Sleave is unwrought silk.

Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking off,

Mr. Cooper absolutely travestied the concluding line. Instead of the *deep-damnation*, he gave us, like a common swearer, and making an expletive of the term,

The deep—damnation!—of his taking off.

In this speech, also, Mr. C. neglected the *concetto* on

With his surcease, success:

the first word should be accented like the second; sur*cease*, suc*cess*.

In the banquet-scene, Mr. C. pleased us least of all. In many parts of it he fell into an unmeaning rant; a failing which is the chief cause of complaint to be preferred against this truly eminent actor. We must exempt from this censure the delivery of the speech in which *Macbeth*, lost in the agitation of his mind, expresses his astonishment at the calmness of his guests:

Can such things be,
And overcome us, like a summer's cloud,
Without our special wonder? You make me strange,
Even to the disposition that I owe,*
When now I think you can behold such sights,
And keep the nat'ral ruby of your cheeks,
When mine are blanch'd with fear.

Those who have seen Mr. Kemble must have been occasionally reminded of him by the voice and gesture of Mr. C. particularly in his courteous address to his guests:

I do forget:—
Do not muse at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those who know me. Come, love and health to all!

It is not our intention, however, to institute any compari-

* Possess.

son between Mr. C. and the classic performer of Covent-Garden Theatre; Mr. C's merits are derived from nature and cultivation, and are not mimic. If we mention his name in company with that of Mr. Kemble, it shall only be to observe, that if the latter be the greater, the former is, in our judgment, the more pleasing of the two.

Mrs. Melmoth's *Lady Macbeth* appeared to us an improvement on her late representation of that character; but we still thought her occasionally deficient in dignity. She read the letter naturally and rightly, and certainly performed the first scene better than before. When walking in her sleep, her setting the candle out of her hand, upon the table, though strictly within the bounds of physical probability, was an action ill calculated to maintain the audience in the belief that she was asleep. Had we seen this action in a real sleep-walker, it would have led us to suspect that she was awake; seeing it in a pretended sleep-walker, it went far toward destroying the illusion. We were struck by the anguish expressed by Mrs. M. to the words, "Here's the smell of blood of "state: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little "hand. Oh! oh! oh!"

We had hardly thought it possible to relate the death of Cawdor in so insignificant a manner as that adopted by Mr. Cain:

> —I have spoke
> With one that saw him die; who did report,
> That very frankly he confest his treasons,
> Implor'd your highness' pardon, and set forth
> A deep repentance: nothing in his life
> Became him like the leaving it;
> He died as one that had been studied in his death,
> To throw away the dearest thing he ow'd*
> As 'twere a careless trifle.

Mr. Cooper had the honour of drawing tears from more

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* Owned, possessed.

than one of the Indian Chiefs who were present at this entertainment; as had Mrs. Woodham, and Mr. Francis, of exciting their laughter, in the little comic opera of

THE ROMP,

which we saw with much satisfaction.

Wednesday Evening, March 19th.

THE GAMESTER.

There are few tragedies that deserve a higher reputation than the very deep one of *The Gamester*. Persons who do not sufficiently appreciate the value of lessons by which a general prepossession against vice and in behalf of virtue is maintained, are often disposed to question the utility with which we hear tales of crimes and sorrows that our spheres of life render it almost impossible we should experience; but *The Gamester* displays scenes that "come home to men's business and bosoms." It is, as the Misanthrophe says, in *The Stranger*, "a tale to be met with every day, to be heard in every street;" In every rank of society, the fortunes, the good fame, the lives, of men—of their wives and of their children—are exposed to the cast of the die and the shuffle of the card-table. There is in *The Gamester* nothing improbable, or forced. Of inestimable worth in its moral, simple and interesting in its fable, correct and elegant in its diction, it is one of the most perfect English dramas. It is a real tragedy; for those who suffer most are the objects of our compassion.

Mr. Cooper was an admirable *Beverly*. To the air and manners of a man of fashion he joined all that was necessary to represent to us the man of innate probity and feeling. His soliloquy in the street, and his subsequent conversation with *Jarvis*, were natural and moving. In the great and concluding scene, he was every thing we could wish. Nothing was over done. It was a most finished, exquisite, and chaste performance. What a pity that an actor so accomplished should ever disgrace his talents by *rant!* and yet this was too often exhibited in the course of the performance.

We have never seen Mrs. Wignell to more advantage than in *Mrs. Beverly*. She had the requisite inartificial dignity and grace. She

might have heightened the pathos of the scene, however, by indulging more freely in the display of affection toward her dying husband. It would have become the woman whom the author of *The Gamester* has made so beautiful a model of her sex.

Mrs. Francis, who is usually more judicious or more fortunate in the employment of her talents, marred the scene with her *Charlotte*. We were distressed at seeing a favourite actress in so aukward a situation.

Mr. Warren's *Jarvis* ably supported Mr. Cooper. Mr. Wood had much to do, and did it respectably. Mr. Cain is entitled to similar praise; but he laboured under a signal disadvantage, in the grotesqueness of his dress, and under another, more usual with him, his forgetfulness of his part; a fault, this latter, in which it would be difficult to detect Mr. Wood.

As to dress, Messrs. Cain, Rutherford, and Mackenzie, would have disgraced a barn. Is the Philadelphia Theatre, never deficient in the habiliments of princes and warriors, so miserably poor in the productions of the modern taylor?

We shall conclude this critique with a cursory reflection, that were *The Gamester* a more modern production, it would be called an imitation of the German School. We have here, addresses to the *Deity*, and much dumb acting: we allude particularly to the last scene. In speaking of these addresses, it would be neglectful not to mention the grace and emphasis with which they were delivered, as well by Mrs. Wignell as by Mr. Cooper; nor can we forbear to observe that, in the latter, the words of the author and the voice of the actor were united to give the sublime of tenderness to the petition,—" and *their* deaths happy!"

We believe it is the *Spectator* that has somewhere complained of that diversion of the thoughts produced by the humour of a farce, presented after a tragedy. For our part, we felt the want of that diversion on this evening. The indisposition of Mr. Harwood prevented the representation of *Ways and Means*, as announced. We had a dance in its stead. A dance; but what we at first mistook for a tiny rabble, just let out of school. We mused upon Miss Mudie, and the judicious observations of a London-critic on her failure, and we were meditating philippics against the puppets of the stage. Miss Hunt's feet put us into a more indulgent humour. We suffered ourselves to be pleased with the *pas-de-trois*, and we laughed at little Jefferson, and his tobacco-box; but, after all, we left the house with a heart

needlessly dejected, and slunk to our pillow, oppressed by the sorrows of the wife, and the baseness of the suicide, who takes refuge in a spoonful of poison, from the calamity he has caused, and which the most limited principle, the faintest sentiment, of rectitude should have commanded him to share.

ADVICE TO ACTORS.

If any scoundrel, yclep'd a Critic, should dare to animadvert on your performance, find out who the fellow is, and immediately commence an attack on his character, private and public. Don't stick at trifles; you may as well say, that he is a robber or murderer, as that he is merely ignorant. But, should you not have confidence in your own powers of abuse, apply to a certain Jew Broker, and he will lead you to a nightly resort of *peep o'day boys*, who, having nothing to lose, are ready to stab the reputations, or hearts, if necessary, of your enemies. Amongst these is a schoolmaster, to whom you may apply for a *schoolboy* translation of any Latin passages you may not have understood in the Critiques against you; but do not depend on his writing English, or Irish, for of the former he knows nothing, and of the latter only the vulgar dialect. Then, if you want a printer, a second *Baskerville*, you will find one in the same society, who is seldom off his *post*, and who is very ready at *invention*. We understand, that a short biography of the latter gentleman is preparing for the press, in which some late *swindling transactions* will be a little dwelt upon, among other flagrant crimes.

The Theatrical Censor cannot so far deviate from common sense, as to insert the numerous communications (although they have every claim to justice and excellence) that have been made to him, respecting the writers in a paper which it would now be indecent to mention. It would be madness to fight with chimney-sweepers:

"Oh! what a dirty, dirty faction!
"What dirty tools they keep in action!
"Worse than the rogues they offer daily
"At shrine of justice at Old Baily."

Democracy Unveiled, Vol. II.

With the next number of this work, which will be published the week the Theatre closes, will be given the general title, &c. and a Prospectus of the plan for publishing the Theatrical Censor next season.

The following lines were written by a lady of New-York, and sent to the managers of the theatre, to be spoken at the benefit of the Miss Hodgkinsons; but, as others had been previously provided, they were not adopted. They possess a pathos which will make its way to every heart; and an ease, an elegance, and a finish, which show that the writer is conversant with the pages of Pope:

When polish'd talents meet an early doom,
And beauty sinks untimely to the tomb,
The muses haste the tuneful meed to pay,
And, crown'd with cypress, form the elegiac lay,
With pensive mien, surround the silent urn,
And mourn, though conscious 'tis in vain to mourn;
No fancied griefs now wake th' impassion'd sigh,
No woe fictitious swells the streaming eye:
For pity here two hapless orphans sue,
And raise their little hands with hope to you.
No mother's soothing voice allays their fears,
No father's cheering accent checks their tears;
Bereft of both, to you they gladly turn,
And hope to find those friends whose loss they mourn.
Ah! think how oft their father's magic powers
Have sooth'd your cares and wing'd the ling'ring hours!
Think with what transport you've delighted hung,
On th' enchantment of their mother's tongue—
Mute is that tongue! those powers to please are o're!
They'll charm the eye—delight the ear no more!
But while you mourn the parents' early fate,
With pity view their children's orphan state;
Raise them from earth, their infant steps sustain;
Remove the pangs of poverty and pain.
Cheer'd by your favours, by your bounty fed,
Their opening talents to perfection led,
May rise to grace these boards, so often grac'd,
By beauty, merit, elegance, and taste:
By you sustain'd, in worth, in charms they'll rise,
And future Hodgkinsons shall bless your eyes.

The price of this work is 50 cents for four numbers. To be had at No. 42, Walnut-street, and at Mr. Phillips's Circulating Library, south Fourth-street. Communications, and orders from the country, received at the former place.